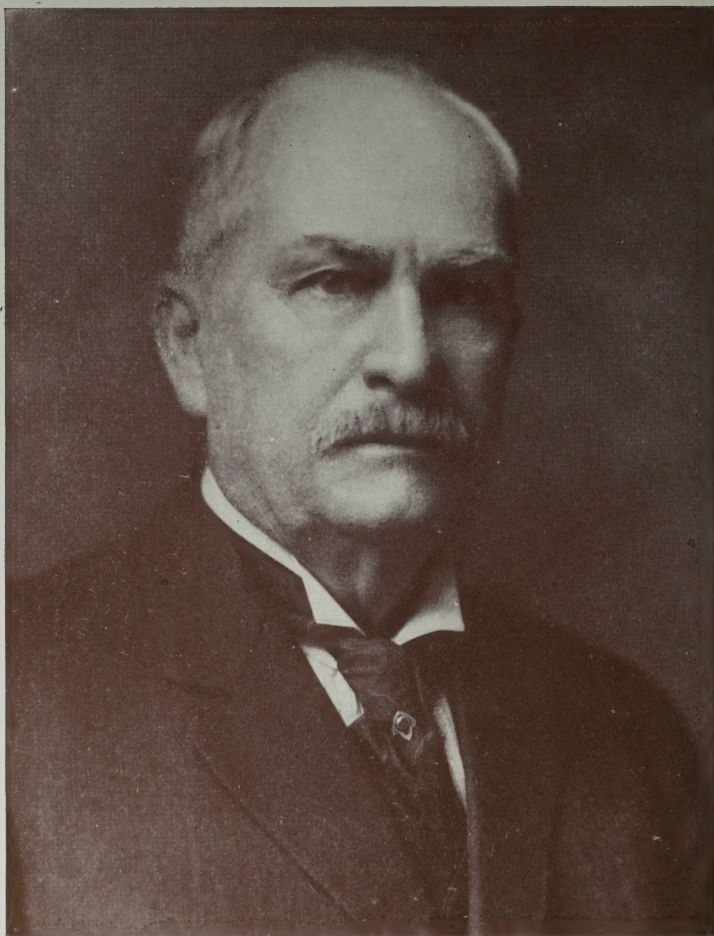


Recollections of the Civil War



Ottavio Perry

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BY
ORAN PERRY

1924

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ORAN PERRY

Born at Liberty, Indiana, February 1, 1838.

MILITARY RECORD—Private Richmond Greys—1859-1861.

Private Co. B—16th Indiana, April 19, 1861—Sergeant Major, May 23, 1861—Mustered out, May 14, 1862—Adjutant 69th Indiana, July 18, 1862—Lieutenant Colonel, March 13, 1863—Brevet. Colonel, U. S. Vols., March 26, 1865. "For the resolute and courageous manner in which he led his battalion in the charge at Fort Blakeley, Alabama, April 9, 1865, during which he was seriously wounded, for his zeal as an officer, and for having a splendid and efficient battalion"—Colonel, April 13, 1865—In command of 69th Regiment, May, 1863, to July, 1865—Brigadier General and Quartermaster General Indiana National Guard, 1902-1905—Adjutant General, 1905-1910—Superintendent Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument, 1918, still in charge 1924.

SERVICE: Army of the Potomac, Army of the Tennessee, Army of the Gulf.

ASSOCIATIONS: Post Commander Grand Army of the Republic, Commander Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, Member Association of the Army of the Tennessee.

A Minute with Lincoln

In the early days of October, 1861, shortly before the battle of Ball's Bluff, our regiment, the 16th Indiana—Colonel Hackleman—was camped near Darnestown, Maryland, in the upper Potomac country; I was the Sergeant Major of the regiment and had asked for Sunday leave of absence to take dinner at the village tavern.

On my way to town I fell in with three soldiers of the 12th Massachusetts. After dinner we tilted our chairs back against the south front of the house facing the road about forty yards away, enveloping ourselves in the smoke of Havana cigars which had exhausted our combined resources to purchase.

Soon after, four men in an open barouch stopped at the road front who remained seated and in conversation for several minutes. Finally one of them alighted, his tall form looming above the landscape, when one of the boys exclaimed, "Why, I believe that is Lincoln," and then simultaneously but without thought of intrusion we rose and moved forward for a close view, stopping at a respectful distance.

Mr. Lincoln had his back to us and seemed to be talking to the occupants of the carriage, two of whom we recognized from pictures we had seen in the newspapers as General McClellan and Secretary Seward. Suddenly the President turned about and faced us much to our confusion, which evidently he noticed, but he quickly relieved us by approaching us with an outstretched hand, saying in a friendly tone of voice, "Why, boys, how do you do," a genial smile spreading over his face.

The 12th Massachusetts boys being nearest, he shook hands with them first, inquiring where they belonged and upon their replying, "12th Massachusetts, Colonel Fletcher Webster," he seemed pleased and said, "I hope he will prove to be as good a man as his father" (Daniel Webster).

Then, turning to me and shaking hands in a cheery way, he said: "Well, where do you hail from," and when I replied "16th Indiana, Col. Hackleman" it seemed to surprise and please him very much, for he shook hands with me a second

time and began to ply me with questions about the Colonel whom he did not know was serving in the Army of the Potomac and who he said was the best friend he had in Indiana. He asked for the location of our Camp, and said if he got through in time with business on which he came that he would drive over and call on the Colonel, but he did not come and I never saw him again. Just at this point in our conversation a carriage carrying four gentlemen came from the west and he went out to meet them; after greeting them he turned toward us again and waved his long arm which I interpreted as another friendly message to my Colonel.

I hurried back to Camp to tell the Colonel the news with my emotions at the boiling point; for up to that time all that any of us knew about Lincoln was the adverse descriptions of a partisan press and I was prepared (if I ever met him) to see something like a gorilla and the disillusion had aroused my indignation to the highest pitch.

After the Colonel had listened to my story, he said, "Well, what did you think of him, which was he most like, a baboon or an ape?" To which I heatedly replied, "Why, Colonel, that ape story is all a damned lie, for he has the best face I have ever seen on a man."

A Dismal Night in Dixie

The sun rose in a blue sky over the unfriendly city of Memphis, that crisp 20th of December, 1863, and shone encouragingly on the weary soldiers who had spent the greater part of the night in embarkation. By ten o'clock the boats comprising the great fleet of Sherman had slipped their moorings, backed out into the river and were drifting about in a helpless sort of a way as if uncertain what to do next.

The interest and excitement of getting under way was augmented by the stern commands of captains, the picturesque but practical profanity of the mates, the quaint intoning of the gray-headed old "uncles," and the weird chorus of their colored brethren of the crew, while the hoarse, discordant whistles, the clang of the bells, the fitful throbbing of the engines, the swash of the water under the wheels, the swelling current and the careening boats, together with the lowering clouds of dense black smoke belched forth from more than a hundred funnels, caused a confusion that invited collision and spread much uneasiness among the troops who packed the frail craft. But the cool heads and skilled hands of the pilots gradually wrought order out of chaos, and one by one the unwieldy steamers dropped into line and began their stately march down the river. I can see them yet; the Forest Queen, Sam Gaty, Empress, and Belle Peoria, the Continental, Polar Star, Jesse K. Bell, War Eagle, and Dic Vernon, the Duke of Argyle, City of Alton, Des Arc, Henry Von Phul, and half an hundred others, interspersed with the gunboats of Porter, stretching away down the river with flags flying, bands playing and troops cheering, a magnificent sight, grander and more impressive than anything we had ever seen. Sullen white citizens lined the banks of the river, silently watching us pass out of sight, and prayerfully hoping that they might never see us again. Hordes of black citizens, with all the fervor of their race, sang hosannas to the fleet, and with hat and hoe, bannanna and bonnet waved Godspeed, until the last boat passed around the bend.

We were 30,000 strong, and known as the "Right Wing of the 13th Army Corps," commanded by Sherman and divided into divisions, first, second, third, and fourth, under command of Generals A. J. Smith, Morgan L. Smith, Geo. W. Morgan and Fred Steele, in the order named. Our regiment was attached to Sheldon's brigade, 3d division. We sailed on the *Sam Gaty*, a steamer so old and rickety that anything that might have happened it would not have surprised us in the least, and was so infested with bedbugs, cockroaches and lice that we sometimes heartily wished the old tub might sink to escape from them.

We were bound for Vicksburg by the way of the Yazoo back door. In his memoirs General Sherman says: "The essence of the whole plan was to reach Vicksburg, as it were, by surprise, while General Grant held in check Pemberton's army about Granada, leaving me to contend only with the smaller garrison of Vicksburg and its well known strong batteries and defenses."

The expedition entered the Yazoo River Christmas afternoon, about five o'clock, landed some troops at Mrs. Lake's plantation and tied up for the night. Next morning we steamed up the river about twelve miles and disembarked at Johnson's plantation, on an island about five miles wide, formed by the Yazoo River and the Chickasaw bayou, which latter followed the course of the bluffs on the south. The enemy made but feeble resistance at this point, escaping the shells from the gunboats by retiring to their stronghold on the hills.

The outlook was anything but inviting. Our landing place was at the highest part of the island, which, not long before, was a flourishing plantation, but the buildings had been destroyed and gaunt chimneys stood useless guard over the ruins. Fences were down and rank weeds contended for mastery with the ragged-looking, half-picked cotton stocks, while scores of circling buzzards blackened the sky; a fitting complement to the desolate scene. The ground sloped southward to the Chickasaw bayou. A winding, weedy road ran down towards Vicksburg, crossing the bayou at a shallow ford and leading up the steep hill on the other side where the enemy was strongly entrenched. As we moved towards the bayou the country assumed a still more forbidding aspect. There were a number of old corn and cotton fields, vast stretches of uncultivated

land, now and then great marshy cane-brakes, which looked as if they might have been the abiding place of snakes, alligators, and everything else that was hideous. Skirting the bayou was a dense wood, chiefly live-oak, whose great spreading branches were draped with ghostly gray moss, which, with every impulse of the wind, and especially by fire light, assumed shapes so weird and fantastic that the spectator was filled with something akin to awe. The woodland was low, dank and noisome. The decaying vegetation which covered the black, slimy soil and the luxuriant poison ivy which clung so gracefully to the trees and festooned the fallen timber, spread death and disease among the invaders greater than the enemy could have hoped to accomplish with shot and shell. It cost our regiment alone nearly one hundred lives, and many men are yet living who still suffer from the poisoning "up the Yazoo." Overflows were evidently of annual occurrence along the bayou and through the wood, the trees showing a distinct watermark ten feet high. In its erratic course the current had scooped out long sloughs of varying depth, and here and there had burrowed pitfalls for the unwary, and under the roots of the giant oaks had dug caverns large enough to lodge a dozen men.

Into this wood in line of battle, under the artillery fire of the enemy, we made our way on the afternoon of the 27th, coming out again in the evening. Tried it again on the 28th, gaining nothing more than a knowledge of the ground, but on the 29th orders were given for battle, with A. J. Smith on the right, Morgan L. Smith and Morgan next, with Steele on the left. Our division was to cross the ford, Morgan leading in person, Blair of Steele's division, supporting. At three o'clock the signal was given, but instead of our general leading he sent DeCoursey's brigade across the ford, holding Lindsey in reserve, and planted our brigade along the bayou about half a mile below the ford, with orders to protect the pontooneers while they laid a bridge and then to charge across, this forlorn hope to be led by the 69th Indiana.

The whole thing was a disastrous failure. DeCoursey got lodged under the bayou's bank, Blair's men were slaughtered like sheep, while we were ingloriously pinned to the bayou's bank, so close that a man could not turn over without danger of being shot. Several of our men were killed or wounded in this way. The enemy allowed the pontooneers to lay the

bridge about one-quarter of the way across, then turning their cannon on it, smashed it to a million pieces, for which I have never ceased to thank them.

The battle was over and our regiment still held its humiliating position. Evidently we had been forgotten. Waiting for orders until his patience was exhausted and the day nearly gone, the Colonel sent me back to hunt up the brigade commander, report the situation and get definite orders. I was adjutant of the regiment at that time. I wish some one could have held a kodak on me while I executed that commission. Such twisting and dodging, such ground and lofty tumbling, such diving into pits and reluctantly crawling out again, such sprinting from a little tree to a bigger one. The pictures would be worth showing. It would be hard even to guess how many times I was shot at, or tell how close they shaved me without hitting. I still feel the excitement of it when I think of it. In one of my dashes for life I fell all over Captain Finley of Company A, who had reached a big tree just a moment ahead of me. He had been to the rear on an errand of some sort and was on his way back. We talked it over for a minute or two and concluded if we stayed there much longer and thought about it we never would go. So we shook hands and made a dash in our different ways and I was soon out of range. I began to hunt for brigade headquarters, tramping around the wood for half an hour or more, asking everyone I met, without gaining anything for my trouble. I was about giving up in despair when I spied Lieut. Lacey, of "Ours," an Aid on the Brigade Staff, sitting on a log smoking his pipe, idly toying with his sword and looking as disconsolate as the "lone fisherman." I hastened to join him, glad to see he was unharmed, though I dreaded to ask him about the rest. With regard to their safety he soon set my fears at rest, and in answer to my inquiry as to the location of headquarters he piloted me to a large oak nearby, where, in a cave scooped out under the roots by the water, were snugly stowed the Colonel commanding the brigade and two or three of his staff. I think I must have shown my surprise and I know I was filled with disgust that he should have thus sheltered himself while at least one of his regiments was still under fire. How long he had been there I do not know. To his credit, be it said, at no time did Lieut. Lacey take shelter there with him.

Without waste of time I made my report and was instructed to tell Colonel Bennett to withdraw his regiment in any way that his judgment would dictate to avoid loss, to select a camping place in the wood and let him know where it was. The regiment was drawn off, company at a time, and bivouacked on the north edge of the wood near a big slough, with orders to build no fires for fear of discovering our position to the enemy. The guns were stacked by companies in column and the men, tired, hungry and discouraged, sat down on their knapsacks, munched dry hard-tack and damned the war.

The Colonel and staff had neither shelter nor food, and having eaten nothing since morning, the cook was sent to the fire limit in the rear to prepare something for us, but he had gumption enough not to come back when he found out what kind of a night it was to be. After he was gone the Colonel suggested that I could kill some of the time by hunting up the headquarters again and notifying them where we could be found. This I did, and fearing the cook might not find his way back in the dark, I concluded to ride to the rear where the sutlers were as thick as grasshoppers and get something to eat on my own hook.

It was growing dark and a gloom was settling over everything. The road was filled with stragglers all headed to the rear, trudging along in a tired, sore-footed sort of a way, but with a dogged persistence that showed that each man had a well-defined object in view. Whatever it was, no one was making it known, for there was no conversation between them. Without cohesion or apparent community of interest they plodded along, turning neither to the right nor to the left as I overtook them, but leaving me to thread my way among them the best I could. For some time I wondered what could be the meaning of this strange unorganized movement just at this time of the evening, when it suddenly dawned on me that they were all on the same errand as myself, and that each man had quietly stolen out of camp on the hunt of a sutler, never dreaming of how many men were like-minded.

A prominent feature in the evening landscape were the big army wagons, heavily laden with ammunition, engineered by stalwart drivers whose sulphurous profanity struck such terror into the hearts of the timid little mules that they fairly tore up the ground beneath them and snatched the wagons along as if they were so much straw.

At one place, drawn up alongside the road waiting their turn, were fifteen to twenty ambulances filled with the wounded of the day's battle, whose moans and groans filled me with compassion. There was nothing I could do to alleviate their sufferings so I hurried by to get beyond hearing, only to be harrowed up by other horrors of war. Just ahead was a field hospital, with a number of log fires surrounding it, for comfort and illumination. It was a busy place. Ambulances were constantly arriving and discharging their loads of mutilated humanity. Surgeons and attendants were hurrying here and there, performing their duties rapidly and humanely. Those whose wounds had received attention and were strong enough to stand the trip were being forwarded to the boats.

Off to one side of the tent and a little back from the road lay a row of the dead, the pallor of their faces made more ghastly by the fitful firelight. The babe in its cradle never slept more placidly than one or two of those I saw there, in startling contradiction to the violence of their taking off. Another poor fellow with open staring eyes, parted lips, uplifted, outstretched arms, seemed pleading for his life, while the mutilated bodies of many others bore such evidence of the agonies they had suffered, that I felt death had been their best friend when he released them.

Turning from this gruesome sight into the road again, I observed a large number of fires that had sprung up just ahead, and concluded I must be very near the sutler's haven. The first thing I came across was a big fly on the left of the road with such a bright, cheerful fire burning at the side that I could not resist the attraction of it. I rode up, dismounted and made the acquaintance of a genial, hospitable quartermaster, who fed my horse, gave me a drink of commissary whiskey, invited me to supper and furnished me with a good cigar. Was anybody ever in such luck? I stayed with this "good Samaritan" a little while after supper, smoking his cigar, toasting my shins at his fire and listening to his fascinating stories. His face is still fresh in my memory, but his name and his regiment I have forgotten years and years ago. I never saw him again after that night. Resisting his tempting offer of a night's lodging, I parted with him with reluctance, and mounting my horse struck out for camp. The road was clear now, but the rain had begun to fall, so I drew my cape over my head, settled myself well in the saddle, gave my horse

free rein and trusted to luck to find the camp. I had jogged along at a pretty good gait for about half a mile when I was startled by a flash on the hills ahead, followed by the deep boom of a heavy gun, then, with that cyclonic rush and demoniac shriek that freezes the marrow in your bones, there passed over my head, seemingly near enough to touch it, an enormous shell, which struck the ground and burst a couple hundred yards to the rear of me. My horse crouched to the ground in abject terror and it was with great difficulty that I could spur him to his feet again and convince him that he was alive and unharmed. This shot was simply a reminder from the enemy that they were still in business at the old stand, and from that time on until daylight, at intervals of twenty to thirty minutes, they raked the woods from east to west with shot and shell to the great discomfort and danger of everyone within reach. I hurried on to camp to find the Colonel in a volcanic state of mind over the failure of the cook to show up. I seconded his emphatic opinion of a man who would thus leave us in the lurch and agreed that killing was too good for him, but I carefully refrained from saying anything about having had my supper.

During my absence he had made discovery and taken possession of an ammunition wagon which stood about seventy-five yards in the rear of our line, and we lost no time in getting out of the rain. The wagon was filled with boxes of ammunition nearly to the top of the bed, but the high bows covered with canvas made quite a roomy tent of it. Our preparations for bed were very simple indeed. The Colonel pulled off his boots, folded them under his head, drew himself up into a knot, covered his feet with the tails of his overcoat and looked as if he was comfortably settled for the night. I had laid down on my back, bunched my cape under my head for a pillow and thanked Dame Fortune for providing for me so luxuriously. For awhile I listened to the firing of the guns and studied the flight of the shells until I could almost predict the time of their return to our neighborhood. Thus relieved of constant apprehension of danger and soothed by the pattering of rain on the canvas I fell into a sound sleep. It lasted about half an hour, when I was awakened by a shell crashing through the tree tops over our heads and raining down limbs, branches and twigs on our canvas roof.

The Colonel declared he would stay in the wagon no longer,

that he hadn't slept a wink for thinking what would be said of him if he should be killed under a wagon cover while the men were floundering around in the mud and rain. He pulled on his boots, crawled out into the darkness and rain, and I saw him no more until morning. Before going he very kindly absolved me from official attendance on him and insisted there was no impropriety in my remaining under cover if I chose to do so. I stayed in the wagon, but I could not sleep. My mind was actively going over the events of the day and each time it would bring me around to the dead men, now lying outside the hospital tent in the pitiless rain, and plainer than all I could see the pleading man with the outstretched arms, staring eyes and parted lips. The night was yet young and the prospect of passing the rest of it in the wagon alone with my heated imagination was giving me the horrors. I crawled to the end of the wagon and peered out into the darkness with the hope that I might find some one who would share the canvas with me and relieve the lonesomeness of the situation. Disappointed at this I laid down again with a determination to cultivate thoughts more cheerful and borrow no trouble, but just then there was a boom from the big gun on the hill and a moment or two later a shell exploded in the camp immediately on our right. There was an agonized shriek, the confused voices of many soldiers, a few sharp cries of pain, each growing fainter until they ceased altogether, and then in my mind I could see the dead man as plainly as if I had been standing beside him. That settled it. I wouldn't have stayed in that wagon another minute for a thousand dollars. I crawled out to take the chances with the rest, and hunted for a big tree to put between myself and our tireless enemy. As I groped around in the inky darkness some one cried out, "Look out, don't knock my house down," and I recognized the friendly voice of Capt. Sam Miller of Company D. He had made for himself a good shelter on the north side of a thick tree by a combination of his oil-cloth blanket with a few branches of a tree and was comfortably perched upon a cracker box. He kindly invited me to share it with him, and for several hours we talked and smoked, heedless of the cannon on the hills. But every good thing has an end, and a shell came sailing through the top of our tree, cutting off branches, and down went our house. I made no further attempt to secure shelter, indeed, there was no real necessity for it, for the

rain had changed to a fine mist and the moon, recently risen, had lighted it up enough to get about without much difficulty. I strolled around to see what the rest were doing. The most of them were lying on thick beds of moss, covered with their oil-cloths and apparently asleep. Many were sitting against trees and lapping over each other four or five deep, others were on their feet huddled in little groups for company's sake, while the tired guards with capes over their heads and hands in their pockets dragged wearily up and down in front of the gun stacks, longing for the break of day.

A few minutes were sufficient to take this all in and I cast about for some other way to kill time. It occurred to me that I would like to go forward to see how things looked along the bayou and get a good sight of the flash of the guns on the hills. I could find no one with equal curiosity so I went alone. It was familiar ground, made so by the events of the day, and, aside from tumbling into the pitfalls two or three times, I made my way to the bayou without much trouble. Night had made a marked change in the scene. The hills were outlined in bold, rugged silhouette against the leaden sky. A death-like stillness prevailed up and down the bayou, in striking contrast to the stirring scenes of a few hours before. The opposite bank which had bristled with muskets all day long was evidently deserted, for I moved along the bank without molestation and I thought how easy it would be to lay a pontoon now while the enemy were napping. I had come out to see the flash of the cannon and I concluded to make myself comfortable while I waited, so I filled my pipe and passed around to the north side of a tree, more to insure the lighting of a match than anything else. It was no sooner fairly lit than there was a discharge of half a dozen muskets across the bayou and the bullets struck the trees all around me. I collapsed and sank down between two roots of the tree that projected themselves like arms of a big rocker. I was greatly surprised to say the least. My heart beat at the rate of one hundred a minute when I thought how easily they could have killed me when I moved along the bayou bank and how thankful I was that they didn't. Their shot was simply a warning one and I heeded it. My curiosity was satisfied. I didn't want to see the cannon fired. I had no interest whatever with anything or anybody on that side of the bayou. I determined to stay where I was until morning. With nothing to excite my imag-

ination or claim my attention the strain was relieved and the relaxation was followed by a sweet, sound sleep.

It was daylight when I awoke and I cautiously made my way back to camp to find everybody astir and discussing the events of the night. As far as was then known there had been no casualties in our ranks, which was cause for rejoicing. Later on, however, on the outskirts of the camp there was noticed a bed of moss covered with an oil-cloth blanket, under which could be traced the outlines of a human form which lay so motionless that it aroused the gravest apprehension. For some moments there prevailed among those who saw it that natural hesitancy and dread to know the worst until one comrade, bolder than the rest, with bated breath and that peculiar, softened, serious expression that every one assumes in presence of death, led the way on tip-toe until he stood beside the prostrate form. Looking about him for a moment, as if bracing himself for the ordeal, he quickly stooped and lifted the cover of the oil-cloth and saw the fresh, fair, chubby face of a seventeen-year-old soldier, who awoke, looked up wonderingly into the anxious faces of his comrades and smiled. The changes that passed over the face of the bold soldier were more rapid than the telling. From apprehension to astonishment, from astonishment to chagrin. It usually makes a man mad when a serious matter ends in a joke and the joke is on him, and our comrade was no exception to the rule. Quickly straightening himself he fairly roared, "Why, damn you, I thought you were dead," and angrily snatching off the blanket and planting a vigorous kick in the ribs of the unoffending cherub, he shouted, "Get out of here, where the h—l have you been all night anyway?" "Been," yelled the youngster indignantly, rubbing his bruised ribs, "why I've been asleep, where do you suppose?" And sure enough he had slept soundly, without waking, through the whole of the dismal night.

The Entering Wedge

"The possession of the Mississippi is the possession of America."
Gen'l W. T. Sherman.

It had rained nearly all winter, and the Mississippi was flowing bank full. The Army of the Tennessee, weary of body, sick at heart, lay hugging the levees and the few patches of dry land about Young's Point, while Vicksburg securely sat on her hundred hills, grimly smiling at our discomfiture.

Three months before we had gaily sailed away from Memphis in what was called the "Castor Oil Expedition," a name suggestive of speedy results. We had expected by this time to have gone to the Gulf of Mexico and back again. On the map it seemed an easy thing to do, and the newspapers assured us there was nothing particular in the way.

The army had waded all over the country waist deep, and "wherever the ground was a little wet, the gunboats had been and made their tracks," but notwithstanding our great expectations and persistent endeavors, every attempt to pass the city or gain a foothold on front, flank or rear, had resulted in dismal failure, and now we were at work in the big canal hoping in due time that the great flood which had hindered us so much in other operations, might be turned to good account at last, and be made to aid us in our voyage to the sea.

These were the dark days of the war; confinement on crowded boats, exposure to weather, lack of wholesome provision, and Yazoo water, had yielded us many thousands sick in the hospital, and an exceedingly large number unfit for full duty in camp. The wail of the fife and the doleful roll of the muffled drum could be heard at almost all hours of the day. We were so surrounded with water, and had so little ground to spare, that the question of a burial place became a serious one.

To add to the prevailing gloom, every boat from up the river brought news of the most depressing character. The Army of the Potomac was at bay and no headway being made anywhere. Volunteering was dragging, and in many places the draft was

being resisted. Timid, loyal people, far from the scenes of strife, almost despairing of the Union, wrote despondent letters to the men in the trenches. The Copperheads had declared the war a failure and were howling for peace on any terms. The proclamations of the President, freeing the slaves and arming the freedmen, were used by these virulent enemies of the government to arouse the old prejudice against the "nigger" and induce men to desert, in many instances making their appeals in person. Almost every regiment felt the effect of this influence by the loss of from one to twenty men. One of these reptiles trailed through our camp. He hailed from Indiana, and was one of the most poisonous kind.

Up to this time we had lost no men, but in a day or two three or four were missing, which aroused the wrath of the Colonel to such a pitch that, dragging himself from a sickbed and calling out the regiment, he poured forth a denunciation of Copperheads and cowards in a style peculiar to Tom Bennett alone, and made such a magnificent appeal to the patriotism of the men that the current was completely turned, and the old spirit of '61 once more possessed them. The Copperhead was fired from the camp and sought safety by flight up the river.

The Colonel builded better than he knew, for a large number of officers and men of neighboring regiments, attracted by the crowd, came over to see what was going on, and swayed by the eloquence of his speech, heartily joined the answering cheers. The spirit of the times spread from camp to camp like a revival, and desertions were at an end.

About this time the rising flood broke through the head of the canal, sweeping away most of the tools, and all of our hopes of passing Vicksburg by the Williams cut-off, stubbornly refusing to finish the task we had begun and spitefully spreading itself over the fields about us, necessitating a change of camp.

Nothing daunted, the great commander moved us 25 miles up the river to Milliken's Bend, where he began his preparations for that last and successful movement which has no parallel in the history of warfare, which was the turning point in the great rebellion, and in which, as a pioneer, our regiment, the 69th Indiana, was fortunate enough to bear a prominent and honorable part. A campaign which, in the language of the southern historian Pollard, "was one of the most success-

ful and audacious games the enemy had yet attempted. In daring, in celerity of movement, and in vigor and decision of its steps, it was the most remarkable of the war."

To General McClernand of the 13th Corps was intrusted the task of finding for the passage of the army a practicable route from Milliken's Bend to New Carthage, about 25 miles below Vicksburg, where in due time it was expected we would meet the gunboats which were to run the batteries and ferry us over the river. The flood was still at its height. The rivers and bayous were over their banks, and well-known roads were out of sight for miles, and the probability of finding a route without a wide detour to the west seemed extremely doubtful. But the experiment had to be tried, and it only remained to select somebody to do it.

It is the special pride of the Sixty-ninth that it was selected by name to seek out the route for the army in this wonderful campaign, and a lasting credit that it was successful in every particular. I quote from the official records of the war of the rebellion, series 1, volume 24, page 495:

HEADQUARTERS, THIRTEENTH ARMY CORPS,
March 30, 1863.

Brigadier General P. F. Osterhaus, Commanding Ninth Division:

General—You will order one regiment, armed and equipped with forty rounds of ammunition in their cartridge boxes, an ammunition wagon laden with suitable ammunition, their camp and garrison equipage and four days' rations, to report opposite these headquarters at 8 o'clock tomorrow, for further orders. I would suggest that the Sixty-ninth Indiana, Colonel Bennett, be detached for the service contemplated.

By order Major-General McClernand.

WALTER B. SCATES,
Lieutenant Colonel and Adjutant-General.

HEADQUARTERS, THIRTEENTH ARMY CORPS,
Milliken's Bend, March 30.

Colonel Bennett, Commanding Sixty-ninth Indiana Volunteers:

Colonel—Besides your own regiment, will have command of detachments of cavalry and pioneers for the purpose of the important expedition with which you are charged. The main purpose of the expedition is to open a practicable communication for our forces via Richmond, La., between this camp and New Carthage. Of course, the shortest route, whether by land or water, all other things being equal, would be preferable. It is certain that there is a navigable communication between Richmond and New Carthage, by Roundaway and Bayou Vidal, and it is also believed that there is a road along the bank of Roundaway Bayou almost the whole distance. That route which you can make available for the passage of troops and trains with the least labor

and shortest time you will select and make available at the earliest practicable moment. The detachment of pioneers, as already mentioned, will be at your command for that purpose, and Lieutenant William R. McGomas, aide-de-camp and engineer on my staff, will give any assistance in his power. If a practicable route be found, you will not only consider it with reference to passage, but also with reference to its capability of defense, and for this purpose you will select and report suitable sites for posts or garrisons along it. If no practicable route can be found, you will immediately report that fact.

Starting tomorrow you will march to Richmond, and upon personal examination you will decide, in view of military considerations, whether you will camp on this or the other side of Roundaway Bayou. Upon reaching the bayou at Richmond, it may be found expedient to cross the cavalry first, and send it forward rapidly, under orders to scour the country around Richmond, as far as water will permit for the purpose of capturing hostile parties, preventing the destruction of cotton and other property, verifying the names and political antecedents of its owners and bring in beef cattle.

All cotton abandoned by its owners or forfeited by treasonable acts, may be brought in and condemned by a Provost Marshal for the use of the United States, in which case the particular lot of cotton, and facts relating to it, will be reported to these headquarters. You will also report to these headquarters daily of the progress of your operations. Any reinforcements you may request will be properly forwarded. While you are authorized to draw provisions and forage from the country, giving receipts to owners, payable upon satisfactory proof of their loyalty at the end of the rebellion, you will be strict and prompt to prevent marauding. Let nothing be taken except by your orders.

Until otherwise ordered, you will report to these headquarters, through your Division Commander, Brigadier General Osterhaus.

Your obedient servant,

JOHN A. McCLERNAND,

Major-General Commanding.

We spent the greater part of the night getting ready, and next morning, March 31, at eight o'clock, the little force, headed by the Colonel and his staff, filed out on the road to Richmond. It consisted of two companies of the 2d Illinois Cavalry, with a Howitzer battery; the 69th Indiana Infantry, the writer in charge, a large company of pontooneers under Capt. Patterson, with a long train of pontoons and steamboat yawls. We called ourselves the "Argonauts," and were about 1,000 strong. The men of the neighboring regiments turned out by the roadside to see us off, and we were subjected to the witticisms usual on such occasions.

It was an exceedingly beautiful day; the sun shone as we had not seen it for months. The sweet south winds were gently blowing, bringing health and good cheer to the languishing

soldier. The fields were already green and the hillsides were sprinkled with flowers. The trees were rapidly putting on their summer dress and the mocking-birds were all atune. The gobbling turkey and cackling hen, the hissing geese and grunting swine, the bleating flocks and lowing herds, lent an additional charm to the landscape, and the heart of the "forager" beat high with joy. This at last was the "Promised Land." We trudged along cheerfully until late in the afternoon we were brought upstanding by the big bayou which runs in front of Richmond, the passage of which was disputed by a considerable force of the enemy.

The impracticability of laying a pontoon bridge under fire was soon demonstrated. Losing no time we brought forward, launched and manned 12 or 15 yawls under the personal direction of the writer and supported by the troops on the banks overhead the crossing was successfully made, only one man in the party receiving a slight wound and an Illinois Cavalry man being killed. We chased the enemy through the town into the country beyond, exchanging shots without casualty on either side, but capturing 10 or 12 prisoners and a large rebel mail on its way to Vicksburg and the east.

I afterwards understood that our Generals obtained enough valuable information from that mail to make our expedition a success, even if we had failed in other ways. The rest of the regiment soon followed, leaving the pontooneers to lay the bridge for the cavalry at their leisure.

The next morning, April 1st, we began scouring the country below Richmond and by the evening of the third had worked our way down to Smith's plantation on the Bayou Vidal, when our march came to an abrupt end. The outlook was anything but encouraging. To the south as far as an eye could reach the country was like a sea. Carthage was yet several miles away, and from all accounts, under water.

Generals McClernand and Osterhaus came down and stayed all night with us, and the dinner we gave them of sweet potatoes, fried kid, stewed chicken and coffee with real cream in it I reckon they will never forget. The result of their visit was a determination to take to the water and find, if possible, some high point of ground on the river bank that might eventually be reached by the army.

A reconnoissance was made by Gen. Osterhaus and Colonel Bennett in skiffs, who found that a landing could be effected

on the levee a few miles below. Immediately setting about to get ready for sea we brought forward and took possession of a large scow belonging to the plantation; we boarded it up as high as a man's head, cut portholes in the sides and ends, arranged the seats and oars like a war galley of old, mounted it with howitzers and ran up the pennant of the Admiral. Altogether she was as something to behold. We christened her the "Oppossum," but what was the special significance of the name I am not at this late date able to tell.

Launching enough yawls to make sufficient tonnage to carry the field and staff and Companies A and F the embarkation took place about one o'clock on the afternoon of April 7th and the fleet set sail amid the good-natured guying of the boys we left behind us. It was a quaint voyage.

Spread out like a line of skirmishers, we rowed down the bayou, across the fields, through the woods; at once time locking with the thick, heavy limbs of the trees, and then again anchoring in the stubborn undergrowth with which the woods were covered. In one of the bayous we struck a strong current flowing to the northward and after pulling against it for about half an hour it suddenly and mysteriously turned as strongly to the south, hurrying us along at steamboat speed.

We passed New Carthage under water and finally came in view of a high, broad levee, defended by 25 or 30 of the enemy. They were not at all disposed to allow the marines in the yawls to land, but when the "Oppossum" hove in sight and gave them a broadside with the howitzers they were simply paralyzed.

The gunboat had always been an object of terror to our Confederate brother, and now here was one more hideous than he had ever seen before, walking across the country, down behind the levee, into the back-door yards. One look was sufficient, and abandoning all thought of defense of country, homes and firesides, away they went at the top of their speed and we after them, helter-skelter, pell-mell down the levee, through the lawn of the plantation, for a moment losing themselves among the negro quarters, then past the sawmill, down the levee and into the woods below. We stopped at the sawmill, steaming hot and out of breath, the net result of the chase being one dead rebel cavalryman and the occupancy of 75 or 80 acres of high ground surrounding the mansion, read-

ily defensible from the south and well stocked with everything under the general term of "forage."

We lost no time in strengthening our position, and in short time had made a strong barricade of logs at right angles with the river and fronting toward the enemy in the south. Anticipating no attack from the river, we gave that side no attention.

From the colored people, of whom there were 20 or 30 on the plantation, we learned that about two miles down the river was Perkins' plantation, where there was a good boat landing and enough ground to hold a big army, and what they called "an army" of rebels was camping there now.

With this information the Colonel and Major hurried back to Smith's plantation where Generals McClernand and Osterhaus were anxiously awaiting them, leaving with me the little battalion to hold the fort. After arranging for the night I turned my attention to the mansion, which up to this time had shown no signs of life. It was a large, roomy house on a commanding site, a basement and two stories, wide galleries all around it, and a balcony on top.

Accompanied by the Adjutant I ascended the broad, imposing flight of stairs to the gallery and knocked at the door, which, after some delay, was opened by a tall, slender, dark-complexioned man with an abundance of long, iron-grey hair brushed behind his ears and apparently 65 years of age, who, with the air of a grandee, begged to know what he could do for us, immediately adding that he supposed that our business was rather with Harrison's battalion than himself, incapacitated by age from defending his country, but that he was proud to say that he was ably represented by four sons in Harrison's battalion who would be glad to measure lances with us at any time. Such being the case he begged that further intercourse between us might cease, and with a magnificent wave of his hand he bade us goodnight.

Unawed by his grandiloquence we told him we thought he did not fully appreciate the situation, that our presence on his place could not so easily be ignored; that in time he might come to take a great interest in us, that for several days we had been doing our best to make the acquaintance of Harrison's battalion, without success, and that we now thought a number of them were concealed in his house, and we would be

glad to have them produced and save ourselves the trouble and himself the mortification of searching the house.

His interest in us was aroused at once, and after a good deal of talk about every man being a king in his own castle he protested in the strongest terms against the idea that he was hiding men that should be in the field and in arms, asserting that none but his household were under the roof, and entreated us to take the word of a southern gentlemen, incapable of lying even to save his life.

The idea of searching his house seemed so utterly abhorrent to him that we told him we would take his word for it, and we politely bade him goodnight and happy dreams, not neglecting, however, to place guards at all doors of the house, an unnecessary precaution as we afterward learned. Our cheerful acceptance of his word won his friendship as far as he could consistently give it to an enemy, and the next day he invited us to take quarters in his house.

This haughty old man interested me very much. He was the first southerner of the ultra type I had ever come in personal contact with. He was as proud and punctilious as a Spaniard, as courteous as a Knight of the Round Table, and possessed of a polished sort of egotism that was very charming in him. He was a firm believer and staunch defender of every political and social dogma of the south, and an active participant in all the measures that had plunged the country into war, being a member of the Legislature that passed the ordinance of secession, a lithograph copy of which hung on his parlor wall. His name was Joshua James, and his greatest regret was that he had not been able to sign it as conspicuously as had John Hancock the Declaration of Independence.

He was possessed of a good share of physical and moral courage, and when we first came did not hesitate to berate us soundly for hanging around his house instead of going out and fighting Harrison's battalion like men. He seemed to think we were a lot of marauders sent down to punish him for the part he had taken in secession, and for a day or two quite enjoyed his martyrdom. Notwithstanding his uncompromising hostility to our cause and his grandiose championship of his own, he had many admirable traits and we grew to like him very much. In one way and another he was a prominent figure in the daily events during our stay at Ion.

The next day the Colonel came down with the rest of the regiment, leaving the cavalry to look up some roads to the west of Smith's plantation. His orders were to hold the position we had gained, at all hazards, until the gunboats ran the blockade, which would probably be a day or two at farthest.

About noon the next day the enemy showed up in considerable force, planted some artillery and kept us busy dodging shells for three or four hours. In response we did a good deal in the way of sharpshooting and made a big fuss with the howitzers, with what effect I never knew.

While this was going on we noticed Mr. James promenading on the second gallery, and the Colonel sent me up to take a walk with him. The old gentleman disclaimed any intention of signaling his friends, but was frank enough to say that he had come up hoping to see us taken in by Harrison's battalion. He evidently expected great things of the battalion, and was quite dejected when he finally saw them withdraw.

They came back again next day and kept us in a very unhappy frame of mind until the sun went down. As night closed in we turned our faces toward Vicksburg and listened longingly for the big guns up the river.

To no one was night more welcome than the darkies of the plantation. The abject terror of these poor people during the shelling was the most pitiful and at the same time the most comical thing I ever saw. At the firing of the first shell they would rush for the barricade, wedge themselves under the logs, and aside from the rolling of eyes as big as saucers would lie there perfectly motionless and speechless all day long. No amount of coaxing, kicking or cuffing would move them. If you picked one up and stood him on his feet he would make no resistance, but once let go of him he went down in a heap like a lot of jelly and apparently without any effort roll under the log again.

The wreck of the Indianola lay against the bank of the other side, and during the night some of our boys went over in a yawl, brought away the steam pipe, mounted it on wheels and planted it behind our works, making a faint attempt to screen it behind some bushes. Then the Colonel took Company G down the levee a little way and burnt a house that had been affording their pickets shelter during the day and stood in the way of giving our "Quaker" gun a clean sweep.

They came up smiling next morning, planted the guns as usual, and began the daily grind. We showed ourselves around the place pretty freely, but made no reply. Suddenly they ceased firing, and there was a great deal of running to and fro, seeking positions for use of field glasses, and then to the relief of ourselves and our colored friends they limbered to the rear. With our "Quaker" gun we had gained a bloodless victory for the day, but we sat up late that night still listening for the guns up the river.

In the meantime the dangers, discomforts and anxieties of the situation were largely offset by the splendid bill of fare furnished at the expense of the unwilling host of Ion. Every day the stock became a little smaller. Every day Mr. James begged the Colonel to set aside something that he might call his own, to save him the humiliation of eating the bread of Uncle Sam, until one day the Colonel told him that this was war, something perhaps he had not taken into consideration when he had so readily voted for secession; that he would probably be bankrupted, and in time the bread of Uncle Sam would be very sweet to him. He turned away without reply as if yielding to his fate, but in a day or two he came to our room in a high state of excitement and indignation saying that he recognized our right as an enemy to take whatever was necessary for the subsistence of the troops, but there was a point where in all common decency the line should be drawn. He said: "Your men have used up all the cattle, sheep and hogs; have robbed all the hen roosts and sucked all the eggs; have eaten the pet rabbits and now, Colonel, they are about to kill three calves only two weeks old."

"Only two weeks old," shouted the Colonel, with a nervous twitching at the corners of his mouth and an expression of intense disgust spreading over his face. For the moment we thought the old confederate had won his suit, but after a gasp and a gulp or two the Colonel's loyalty overcame his nausea and he blandly replied, "My dear Mr. James, if the boys can stand it, you certainly can." This was the last straw, and the old man never after made another protest. He accepted the situation with resignation, and it was one of our greatest pleasures during the rest of our stay to keep his larders well filled from the abundant stores of "Uncle Sam."

Late in the afternoon of the 16th, to our great surprise, we saw the smoke of a steamer down the river, and we hurried

up to the balcony to get a better view of her. The cold chills ran up and down our backs when Mr. James told us that it was the rebel ram "Queen of the West" which had sunk the Indianola a short time before, and our hair fairly stood on end as we looked down on our flank so exposed to the river.

She came slowly steaming up, and we momentarily expected to see the enemy file out of the woods in our front. We summoned up all hands and disposed ourselves as best we could for safety and defense.

With bulging eyes we watched her as she came almost on our flank, then turned her nose towards us, then her broadside, and then to our great amazement and relief steamed majestically down the river without firing a gun, and to this day I can't tell why unless it was simply a reconnoissance preparatory to an attack by land and water. We felt as if a few more experiences like that in such an exposed, helpless place would turn our heads grey, so the Colonel hurried the Adjutant off to Smith's plantation with a report of the affair.

The next day we were joined by the 49th Indiana who brought the welcome news that the gunboats would run the blockade the next night.

We were exceedingly glad to see them. For 16 days we had been on the outpost, our nerves at high tension all the time, and we were beginning to want to share the responsibility and anxiety with some one else. They assisted us in fortifying the river front, and in a short time we were ready for the "Queen," the "Webb" or any other gunboat. Late in the afternoon the steamer made her appearance down at Perkins' plantation, but came no farther.

We were afterwards told that she was landing troops from Grand Gulf, reinforcing those already there, with the intention of attacking us next day. This was Mr. James' supposition at the time, and he seemed very happy to think he was to be relieved of us so soon. In anticipation of the coming event of the night the officers of the 49th joined us in the second gallery of the mansion. It was a beautiful night, and our spirits were at high tide. We had an unusual number of good singers among us and someone, I don't know who, introduced for the first time the now well-known song of "Rally Round the Flag." It was a catchy air, well suited to the occasion, and we sang it over and over again until we were almost in a camp meeting frenzy.

Mr. James sat with us enjoying the melody, even if he did not concur in the sentiment, and expressed great admiration for us that we were able to enjoy ourselves so much with the almost certain prospect of defeat and capture staring us in the face.

The Colonel thinking it a safe time to disabuse his mind told him frankly that we were on our way to Vicksburg, that the gunboats and transports would pass the batteries that night, and in a few days Grant's Army would file through his front dooryard; that the Confederacy would be split in two, and that we were simply the ENTERING WEDGE.

His amazement was so great that it took him some little time to realize it all. He had not once thought of the possibility of such a thing, and now he could understand why we had held on so tenaciously to Ion.

Poor Harrison's battalion! All of his fond hopes for it as a defender of his country were scattered to the winds. He admitted that if we ever set foot on the railroad track back of Vicksburg that their cause was lost, and that would be the time to sue for peace. But he took comfort in the old saying "there's may a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip."

The boats had not yet run the batteries, and the army was not yet over the river. About 11 o'clock when the excitement was at the highest there came from up the river a heavy boom, then another, and another in quick succession, until the air was filled with deep bellowing of the guns. Then a great light went up and brightened the sky for an hour or two and speculation was rife as to the cause. It remained an open question until the next day when it was found to have been the burning of the ill-fated "Henry Clay."

The firing did not cease until about 3 o'clock, when we parted company, strong in the hope of success. We turned out after a nap of two or three hours, but found no boats in sight. About 8 o'clock we sighted three or four barges floating down the river, which we towed in and tied to the bank. They were loaded with the camp equipage of several divisions of the army, and we took from one of them a brand new silk flag, and in bravado hoisted it on the balcony of the mansion, where it could be seen alike by friend and foe.

The morning hours dragged on slowly, and between our faltering hopes of success above, and apprehension of attack from below, we were in a very troubled state of mind. But

about noon "we saw the smoke 'way up the river, where the Linkum gunboats lay," and we made a rush for the balcony to find Mr. James there ahead of us. The old man was very grave, the pallor of his face furnishing evidence of the trouble and excitement of the past few hours. All morning he had been buoyed up with the hope that the venture was a failure, but now he stood on the balcony, his face turned eagerly up the river with the despairing look of the gambler about to cast his last dice. We, too, earnestly scanned the river, hoping for the best. At last, just at noon, there steamed around the bend the "Benton," then the "Louisville," and in quick succession the "Tuscumbia," "Carondelet," "Lafayette," "Mound City," "Pittsburgh," "Cincinnati," and the transport "Silver Wave," and a great triumphant shout went up from every throat on Ion, save one.

The old man gazed at the fleet a few moments in a dazed sort of way, and then as if suddenly realizing the tremendous consequences to follow threw up his hands exclaiming, "My God! This is the entering wedge," and kneeling down, bowed his head on the railing, sobbing as if his heart would break. Feeling that further exultation in his presence would be but bitter mockery we quietly slipped away, leaving him still kneeling, with the flag of our country floating caressingly over his troubled head.

In the course of half an hour the boats had all tied up or anchored in front of the mansion, and the celebration that followed was something to be remembered the rest of our lives. It was interrupted long enough to allow the 49th and 69th to march down to Perkins' plantation, preceded by a gunboat shelling the woods.

The enemy had withdrawn to Grand Gulf during the night, doubtless having had the news of running of the batteries by telegraph from Vicksburg. We returned to Ion, and that night gathered up our singers, went on board the Benton and sang for Admiral Porter and General Grant for two or three hours. There was nothing too good for us on the Benton that night.

Wednesday, April 27th, at 4 a. m., the 49th and 69th broke camp, turned our backs on Ion forever, and by six o'clock were in our quarters at the splendid camping ground at Perkins. Here ended the special service for which we had been detailed; a successful mission, full of danger, adventure and anxiety, not

unmixed with pleasure; an honorable and distinguishing service, having piloted to this rendezvous the army which was destined to win immortal fame in one of the grandest campaigns in the history of the war.

During our occupancy of Iou we had sent several excursions by water to the west, operating in connection with the cavalry from Smith's plantation, and had found by making a detour of several miles west, a practical route from Smith's to Perkins' plantation, the water having subsided enough to allow the passage of troops, and by this road the army came pouring in. In the meantime a fleet of seven transports and a number of barges had run the batteries at Vicksburg and were now tied up at Perkins. On these we embarked on the morning of April 29th. Then came Grand Gulf, Port Gibson, Raymond, Jackson, Champion Hills, Black River and Vicksburg.

The Confederacy was split in two and "The great river went unvexed to the sea."

The Sergeant of Company F

*"Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith, than Norman blood."*

I remember the first time I ever saw him. It was at the mounting of the guard. He was a large-boned, angular man, a little stooped in the shoulders, awkward of mien, and approaching middle age. His hair had not yet been reduced to the regulation standard, and a heavy brown beard fringed his plain face. He was wearing his first suit of blue, and evidently had accepted everything issued to him without protest. His trousers were a little too long, his coat a little too short, and he had yet to learn how unpardonable was the sin of appearing at parade without it buttoned up to the chin. An undersized infantry cap clung timidly to his head, while his loose belt was sagged low down in front by the weight of the misplaced bayonet. Awkwardly clasping the trigger guard of the gun in a futile attempt to carry arms and standing at attention in a position entirely his own he presented a picture painfully bordering on the grotesque.

"I was just fresh from the Army of the Potomac where style was everything, and as I looked at the unpromising subject before me I wondered why they had enlisted him, and what they expected to do with him. I watched him as he marched away with the guard, vainly trying to keep step to the gay music of the band, and I thought I never had seen any one so completely out of tune with all the surroundings.

"Reflecting upon it afterward, I remembered that when explaining the duties of the guard he had given me the closest attention, that I never looked in his direction without encountering the wistful gaze of his soft brown eyes, and I recalled a touch of pathos in his homely face that made me curious to know more of its owner.

"I wondered what moved this man of peace at his age, to take up a line of life so foreign to his nature, so uncongenial to his tastes. Had the world used him ill; had he nothing to leave behind, or had he some sorrow which he hoped to drown

in the din of strife? Else why did he enlist? I could account for myself, for I was young and my patriotism was supplemented by a love of adventure and the promptings of ambition.

"But this man puzzled me. They told me he had quitted his farm; left behind him his wife, children and friends; taken on himself the hardships of an enlisted man's life, for no other reason than a conscientious belief that it was a duty he owed to his country in her time of need. I could hardly realize such a sacrifice as this, and it had to be proven before I could believe it.

"Evidently he had good standing among his friends, for he was elected a Sergeant at the organization of his company.

"I noted from time to time his progress in the art of war; his uphill contests with the tactics; his disheartening struggles with the manual, as well as his earnest endeavors to qualify himself as a non-commissioned officer. Always on the side of discipline he gave his officers an unquestioned support, while his firm but gentle enforcement of all orders entrusted to him won the abiding respect of those subordinate to him.

"His even-handed justice in the performance of his duty as Commissary of the Company is held in affectionate remembrance by all of his comrades to this day. The hardships of the march, the vexations of the camp, never seemed to disturb his equanimity, while duties both disagreeable and dangerous were performed with unfailing fidelity.

"In spite of my preconceived ideas of what constituted a model soldier, I could see that they were gradually being undermined by this man. Day by day he took new hold on the profession of arms. He was advancing by parallels, and each week found him a little further to the front.

"Then came the great battles, the supreme test, when, in a measure, rank is leveled, style is nothing; courage is everything; when 'a man's a man, for a' that,' and from the smoke of conflict he emerged unharmed and stood forth in bold relief, a grand soldier of the Republic, the peer of any man in the splendid regiment that never turned its back upon the foe.

"No uncertainty about him now. I knew what he was good for, and to the end he had my unwavering confidence and respect. Time wore on and the term of our service came to be

counted by days. His comrades noticed that, Cincinnatus like, his mind had turned toward the farm again, and he talked cheerfully of wife, children and friends, laying plans for the future, and already treating the war as a thing of the past. Conscious of a soldierly record above reproach; happy in the prospect of enjoying a well-earned peace, he went about his daily duties contentedly humming the quaint old tunes familiar to him in the days of his boyhood.

"He had served up to this time without harm, and if he had ever been absent from the regiment I do not know it. His longings for home were appreciated by the men and officers of his company, and his Captain having his safety in view obtained for him a detail in the Ambulance Corps.

"We were now investing the works at Blakely, busily burrowing in the trenches, exchanging desultory shots with the enemy defending them, and with so little effect that we all became careless of results. It was on the 6th of April, only one day before the fall of Mobile, only one day before the surrender of Lee; only one day before the close of the war. I had just returned to my tent from a trip along our lines when some one burst in and said Sergeant Harter was badly wounded. No one seemed to know just how it happened, and I lost no time in useless questioning, but under the shade of a tree, with his pale face turned toward the east, and a far-away look in his eye, I found the man of whom we had been so solicitous almost breathing his last. It seemed as if his life from the guard mount to the grave flashed through my mind with the rapidity of lightning. Kneeling by his side, taking his cold hand in mine, I spoke as best I could words of comfort and cheer. Slowly turning his face towards me the light of recognition came into his eyes, and with a smile of rare sweetness spreading over his face he softly said, 'It's all right, Colonel,' and, gently pressing my hand, once more turned his face away.

"With one foot on the threshold of his home, just about to embrace his wife and children, he receives a stern command to about face and take service forever in another army. Still the same simple-hearted, obedient, patriotic, uncomplaining soldier, he obeyed the call without a protest. There was nothing I could do for a man like that, and with a heavy heart I left him where he lay, patiently waiting his turn to be ferried over the river to his new command.

"I always think of this Sergeant, so rough upon the surface, so gentle at the core, as a typical American volunteer soldier; a law-abiding citizen, striving to do the right, as God gave him light, a lover of peace, understanding and appreciating the institutions of the country, and a sturdy defender of them when attacked.

"There are hundreds and thousands of them in this country just like him, and they will rise up when the occasion requires. It is this fact that renders standing armies unnecessary and makes this Great Republic the most peaceful and most powerful of all the nations of the earth."

A Barbarous Battle

"Cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war."

Although the fall of Vicksburg placed the Mississippi River under the control of the Federal Government, it required an army of 50,000 men and a large fleet of gunboats to protect the navigation during the continuance of the war.

Troops were stationed at near intervals, from Cairo to the Gulf, while gunboats constantly patrolled certain stretches of water up and down the river, like sentries on posts. Notwithstanding these precautions, an alert enemy frequently attacked passing steamers with varying success, the most serious affair of the kind being the subject of this paper.

Engaged in this service during the summer of 1864, the Division to which our regiment belonged was stationed at Morganza Bend, La., where tied to the bank, under steam night and day, lay a sufficient number of steamers to transport the entire Division to any point in the district, at a moment's notice. It was a hard, exacting service, keeping every one in a state of expectancy or performance from one month's end to the other.

I had brought with me from the nerve-racking Red River campaign, what the doctor called a "walking fever," not sick enough to go to bed, and not well enough for full duty. Believing a change of climate would break it, he suggested a trip up the river and back.

On Sunday afternoon, August 7, 1864, at 3 p. m., I took passage on the steamer Empress, bound from New Orleans to St. Louis. She was the largest boat on the river and was loaded to the guards with government freight. She also carried over 600 passengers composed of citizens (nearly 100 of whom were women and children), sick and wounded soldiers, officers on leave or changing stations.

A battalion of 200 soldiers of the 22d Kentucky, composed of three companies commanded by Captains Bacon, Swigert and Grey, attended by Medical Officer Dr. W. B. Davidson, also embarked at Morganza and took quarters on the hurricane

deck. They had just re-enlisted for the duration of the war, after three years' strenuous service and were going home on veteran furlough. They were a joyous party.

After securing my state-room I looked about to get the run of the boat and make acquaintance among the passengers. General John McNeil was posted as the senior military officer on board, as required by law, and I lost no time in paying my respects to him. He had the distinction at that time of having a reward of \$10,000 offered by the Confederate Government for his capture, in retaliation for his hanging twenty rebel bushwhackers in Missouri during the early part of the war. This made him a valuable prize, so that every rebel officer in his vicinity kept a sharp lookout for him. He had just been relieved from command at Port Hudson and was on his way to other duty in Missouri.

The boats that plied the river were infested with rebel spies, male and female, who kept the Confederate commanders well posted as to the movement of steamers, value of cargoes, etc. The Empress had the usual experience with one of these emissaries. She came on board at Vicksburg, carrying a permit from the Provost Marshal of that post, allowing her to pass through our lines. She went ashore at Skipwith's Landing a few hours later and evidently communicated with General Marmaduke, commanding that Confederate District, notifying him of the presence of General McNeil on the Empress.

The Empress was a sluggish boat, capable of carrying large cargoes of freight, yet built with a view to the pleasure and comfort of passengers who had a tedious journey ahead of them.

Forward of the Clerk's office the cabin deck had been extended about seventy-five feet farther than customary, and being covered by the hurricane deck, it afforded a delightful loafing place with a fine outlook up the river. It was liberally provided with easy chairs and comfortable settees, furnishing accommodations for a couple of hundred people. The weather being warm, it was taxed to its full capacity all day and far into the night.

The passengers who occupied it represented all conditions of life, military and civil, all of whom fraternized with the freedom and equality known only on board of ship. It was a continuous town meeting where all of the current questions of

the day were thrashed out and finally settled to the apparent satisfaction of all concerned.

Conspicuous among this company was a preacher from New Orleans, a northern man, bubbling over with loyalty to the Union, who afterwards was a distinguished bishop of the denomination to which he belonged. He was stout and good humored, had a strong, sonorous voice that penetrated every nook and corner and which worked "over-time." He was an all-around good fellow and we liked him very much. The army officers found this deck an attractive loafing place, because of the presence of the three score or more ladies, the lack of such society during the past three years making them especially appreciative of the opportunity now afforded them.

Convalescents were assigned the airy places, while the children were allowed the range of the whole deck and were rapidly being spoiled by the partial passengers.

The Empress was on the fifth day of her journey and not a thing had occurred to frighten the travelers, or break the peace that reigned. The probability of attack seemed to have passed out of the minds of the happy company.

On Wednesday afternoon I was sitting at the front with my feet on the guard rail, enjoying a cigar, between two officers of the 21st Indiana Heavy Artillery. On my left was Lieut. Siddons, sick and emaciated, with barely enough strength to sit alone; on my right, Lieut. Sherfey, a handsome fellow, in exuberant good health, who had been detailed to accompany his brother officer to his home.

We were rounding the bend in a narrow part of the river, when "bang" into our faces blazed a battery of artillery. Impulsively, we pushed our chairs over backwards and lay sprawling on the floor. For a moment the crowd was so dazed that they seemed frozen to their places, but a volley of musketry which quickly followed the artillery woke them to a realization of the peril they were in. At the same time there came from the levee the voices of hundreds of rebel soldiers shouting: "Surrender, surrender." Then the full horror of the situation seized us and the panic began. It was indescribable.

Just then General McNeil rushed out of the front door of the cabin shouting at the top of his voice: "No surrender, no surrender. I can't afford to sell for \$10,000 today."

I was the next ranking officer on the boat, so accompanied by Sherfey, I reported to the General for orders. He directed me to take charge of the cabin deck, compel everybody to lie down and stay there. He then went above and took charge of the hurricane deck and I did not see him again until the fight was over.

I set Sherfey to work heading off the rush on the right side of the boat and it was a joy to see the masterly manner in which he accomplished his task. With a loud voice of authority he demanded that everybody stop where he was, lie down and be still, his ready fist now and then enforcing his decree, and occasionally hurling righteous oaths against men beyond his reach, who were forgetful of the rights of the women and children. On my side, aided by two or three efficient officers, I was equally successful and now the whole terror-stricken crowd lay silent and motionless.

A survey of the deck presented many striking effects. The women, loath to lie down, had instinctively huddled up against the guard rail in a sitting position, in a manner lapping over each other and, except for the shudder that ran through them as each cannon was discharged, were the coolest and most collected mortals on the deck.

The men, obeying our orders to the letter, were lying on the deck, face downward, in many places two deep. The quick eye of Sherfey caught sight of the preacher, flat on his ample stomach, his legs sprawled wide out, with another man dove-tailed between them, his elbows on the floor acting as props, his expansive face resting in his two hands, and his eyes big as saucers, looking appealingly into ours. "Well, well," exclaimed Sherfey, "for once in his life the parson hasn't a word to say."

Remembering the helplessness of Siddons, I had him laid on the floor where he might not be trampled on and with a lot of Adams Express chests between him and the enemy. He acknowledged this attention with a grateful smile.

The working of the human mind in time of extreme danger is the most incomprehensible thing in the world, for I remember that when the panic was at the highest and the prospect of instant death seemed the greatest, I admired the beautiful fit of Sherfey's uniform and wondered where he got it.

In the meantime the battle between the enemy on shore and the soldiers on the hurricane deck was raging furiously.

I knew by the crack of the rifles and voices of the officers that the Kentuckians were putting up the fight of their lives and that surrender was the last thing in their minds. They were keeping our assailants close under cover of the levee, thus lessening the effectiveness of their fire and encouraging the rest of us very much.

But when, notwithstanding this splendid defense, a half dozen cannon balls would plow into the cordwood in the boiler deck or crash through the framework of the cabin deck, our hearts would sink like lumps of lead, leaving us with only a glimmer of hope.

The boat was making slow but steady progress and the pilot knowing there was a limit to the depression of artillery kept her as close to shore and under the bank as much as possible, a wise precaution which greatly aided in our escape.

She was running with one wheel, the other next to the battery having been put out of business early in the action, and was rounding the second bend with good prospects of getting away.

Having restored order at my end of the boat, I became curious to see how things were going on above, so leaving Sherfey in charge I climbed the stairs to the hurricane deck, only to be horrified by the sight of the headless body of the captain of the boat, stretched out in front of the pilot house.

Admonished by the bullets that whistled and sang all around me and heeding the frantic gestures of the pilot, I hurried below, much faster than I went up, fully convinced that the upper deck was no place for me.

By this time the steamer had gotten far enough around the bend to bring her once more in range, and present her stern to the battery, a situation the artillerymen were quick to take advantage of.

For a little time the Kentucky sharpshooters prevented them from accurately sighting the guns, and as the cannon balls hurtled above us we answered with derisive shouts.

A few moments later a solid shot passing through the vessel from stern to stem cut the steam pipe connecting the boiler with the engine, and we were enveloped in a dense cloud of steam. It did not take us long to discover that the boat had stopped and was beginning to drift back past the battery, and the horror of it seemed for a little time to paralyze everybody.

We were awakened from our stupor by the firing of artillery in front of us and around the bend swiftly came our preserver, the gunboat Romeo, Captain Baldwin.

The log book of the Romeo thus modestly tells the story of saving the lives of hundreds of people, as well as a valuable steamer and cargo:

“Off Gaines Landing, 12 to 4.

“Warm and clear.

“3 p. m. Steamer Empress hove in sight, coming up, and when about two miles below she was opened upon by a rebel battery of ten guns. We got up anchor and went to her assistance, fired five shots at the enemy and then took the Empress in tow, she being disabled. (140 lbs. steam.)

“R. P. SHAW.”

“4 to 6 p. m., warm and clear. 5—Landed on Mississippi side and made Empress fast to the bank and stayed to guard her while she could repair her machinery. (140 lbs. steam.)

“JAMES E. ERNEST.”

Once assured of safety the pent-up feelings of the passengers burst forth in cheers, congratulations and handshaking lasting until the boat was tied up to the bank. Looking for Siddons, I found him lying just where I had left him with the same smile on his face—but he was dead.

After the excitement had quieted somewhat, several of us, including the minister, made a tour of the boat to see what damage had been done. The gunboat men told us that they had counted 102 discharges of artillery and we found that 62 of them had struck the vessel in various places, doing great damage to the cabin, putting out of service the larboard engine and wheel and utterly destroying the barbershop and bar. The boilers had been saved partly by the huge piles of cordwood stacked on each side of them, but principally because the cannon could not be depressed sufficiently to reach them.

The cannon balls struck near enough, however, to completely demoralize the negro stokers, who abandoned their posts and fled to the hold for safety, from which nothing could entice or drive them.

A detail of the 22d Kentucky was standing guard on the boiler deck and the situation was saved by Pat McAndrew, an enlisted man and a steamboat fireman before he was a soldier,

who quickly organized a crew of his comrades, took charge of the boilers, continuing that duty until the boat was out of danger.

By this act of heroism, Pat displayed a genius for meeting emergencies, often lacking in men of higher station and superior knowledge. But the incident passed with but little comment and Pat himself made no claims to having done anything unusual, and if living today would probably be surprised to know that I have always placed him high up on my list of heroes of the war.

The amount of broken glass and other debris scattered about the cabin can well be imagined and needs no description. A cannon ball had passed through my state room, barely grazing the valise containing all of my wordly possessions.

But of all the loss of property I think the destruction of the bar distressed me the most. That splendid plate glass mirror, before which we were wont to assemble about ten o'clock every morning to admire ourselves, was smashed to a million pieces and its massive frame now only a pile of kindling wood. Those beautiful cut glass bottles, with seductive labels, were all broken and scattered over the floor, mingling with cigars, lemons, crackers and matches which floated in the fiery liquid.

“Whiskey, whiskey everywhere,
But not a drop to drink.”

The preacher poked his head through the broken glass door of the bar, and when he saw the prostrate form of his old enemy, John Barleycorn, whose life-blood was slowly oozing through cracks of the floor, he fervently exclaimed: “The Lord be praised.” While I—gazing sorrowfully on the sad scene, and struggling with a thirst that well-nigh choked me, why, I—could have cried.

The hurricane deck did not present as ragged an appearance as I had expected. During the action it was almost on a level with the levee and when I first realized the nature of the attack I thought the soldiers of the 22d Kentucky would be swept out of existence; instead of that their location on that deck was the salvation of themselves and the rest of us.

These Kentuckians were not the kind to be caught napping. Being the good soldiers they were and knowing the conditions along the river as well as they did, they had anticipated an attack from the first and were prepared for it.

At the first alarm they had fallen behind cover and so rapid and fierce was their fire and so accurate their aim that the enemy behind the levee found it very difficult to get a telling range on us again.

Attached to this battalion as Medical Officer was Dr. W. B. Davidson, now an honored citizen of Madison, Ind., who at the time of the attack was confined to his state-room by illness. He immediately dressed and hurried to his post with the men on deck, attending to his duties, under fire with the rest until the fight was over. There was much to do and there was no other surgeon abroad. I take off my hat to the ill-requited, seldom promoted, occasionally maligned and often forgotten Surgeon of the army. I have had the urgent need of him a time or two in my life and he has been very good to me.

The casualties in this engagement were seven killed, John Malloy, Captain of the Empress; Lieutenant Siddons, 21st Indiana Heavy Artillery, and five enlisted men and boat hands unknown to me. Thirteen were wounded, soldiers of the 22d Kentucky and members of the crew, and one child in the ladies' cabin, from a splinter split off the woodwork by a cannon ball.

I take this opportunity to say a good word for another class of men who played an important part in the war, and whose services are seldom thought of in connection with it—the steamboat men. Always under the orders of the Government, with no arms in their hands, continually in danger, and with no hope of military reward, nearly always under suspicion of disloyalty, sometimes holding an outspoken conviction of the justness of the southern cause, yet at all times loyal to the service in which they were engaged.

The sympathies of the Captain of the Empress and the pilot on duty during the action leaned to the south, for they had told me so. They could have surrendered us to the enemy, but they did not. The honor of the service would not permit them to do so, their first duty always being the welfare of those intrusted in their care. So on this day Captain Malloy stood on the hurricane deck in his accustomed place before the pilot house, unafraid and alone, loyally trying to save the lives committed to his charge, only to lose his own.

It is with pleasure that I copy from the rebellion records the following appreciation by the General commanding the Department of Missouri:

"Headquarters, St. Louis, Mo., Aug. 19, 1864.

"General Orders No. 152.

"The General commanding the Department takes great pleasure in calling attention of both citizens and the army to the gallant conduct of the officers and crew of the steamer Empress during her recent trip from New Orleans to this port.

"While in a narrow and difficult part of the river and within musket range of the shore, the steamer was suddenly fired upon by a heavy rebel battery, supported by a strong body of infantry.

"The firing was rapid and accurate, almost every shot taking effect and the boat, filled with unarmed passengers, in a moment became a scene of frantic terror.

"Passengers in their panic demanded the surrender of the steamer, but the officers coolly remained at their posts and brought her through the danger, saving by their bravery and noble sense of duty incalculable suffering to those on board and the valuable steamer and cargo to the Government.

"Captain John Malloy was shot dead at his post and while the General commanding deeply sympathizes with the family and friends of the deceased he holds the noble example of unflinching resolve in the performance of duty as one worthy of the emulation of all.

"The first and second mates, Hugh Davis and David Davis; the pilots, Thomas Gosler and Enoch King; the engineers and assistants, George Bruce, Andrew Pendleton, Judd Weber and William Tennant, and the first and second clerks, John C. McFall and Wm. B. Bradley, are worthy of special praise.

"Following the example of their gallant Captain and regardless of the terror and confusion around them they remained true to their duty and bore themselves with such bravery as would do no discredit to the veterans of the Naval Service.

"By command of Major General Rosencrans.

"O. D. GREEN,

"Asst. Adjt. Gen. and Chief of Staff."

This order is none too complimentary and is a fair statement of fact, except that the demand for surrender came from the enemy on shore and not from the passengers on the boat. Our interests lay the other way.

The man to whom we felt the most indebted and upon whom we showered our grateful thanks was Captain Baldwin, commanding the gunboat *Romeo*, who while modestly accepting them seemed very much embarrassed by his sudden rise to distinction. Evidently he had not been used to bouquets.

Being an eye-witness to the promptness with which he came to our rescue, the masterly manner in which he handled his boat under fire of the enemy, grappling the *Empress* at the critical time and rapidly towing her around the bend to safety, I was surprised and grieved to read in the rebellion records the following *inappreciation* of him, written by his immediate superior officer, Lieutenant Commander E. K. Owen, commanding the 6th District, to Captain A. M. Pennock, Fleet Captain and Commandant of Station, Mound City, Illinois:

“U. S. S. Louisville, Choctaw Bend, Aug. 14, 1864.

“Sir: On the eleventh instant a battery of ten pieces of artillery opened on steamer *Empress* as she was passing Gaines Landing; six men were killed and several wounded. The *Romeo*, Captain Baldwin, was near enough to save the *Empress* from falling into the hands of the rebels.

“Enclosed find the report of Acting Master Baldwin of the *Romeo*.

“The *Romeo* undoubtedly saved the *Empress*, yet the fears entertained by Captain Baldwin had the *Empress* fallen into the hands of the enemy, are not entertained by me.

“I must again mention that I am of the opinion a more competent person ought to be placed in command of the *Romeo*. Captain Baldwin is entirely too old and too unused to naval life to render him an efficient commander of an active vessel.”

Perhaps Baldwin was an old fogey and I suspect he was a “volunteer,” but I doubt if any one act of any other naval officer on the Mississippi saved as many lives and as much valuable property as that of “Old Man” Baldwin.

After viewing the damage to the boat, so convinced was the preacher that our escape was something miraculous, so firm was his conviction that a mightier power than the 22d Kentucky or the Captain of the *Romeo* had saved us, that he announced a “praise meeting” would be held in the cabin at early candle light.

It was a great success, the cabin being crowded to its full capacity. The parson was on familiar ground once more, and

had found his voice. He took command by right of his "cloth" and we, as obedient volunteers, sang the hymns he gave out to us, with a fervor that fairly raised the roof.

The next day while the repairs were being made we buried our dead in the lonely woods skirting the banks of the Mississippi and a little later proceeded on our way up the river attended by the Romeo.

This affair of the Empress left a bad taste in my mouth. It was not war. It was slaughter. I never bore grudge against the enemy who, gun in hand and acting under the recognized rules of war, sought to take my life—disarmed, I could love him as a brother—but I never could become reconciled to the murderous bushwhacker who turned his guns on the non-combatants, women and children of the Empress. He never got his deserts, for after peace had spread over the land he was elected Governor of Missouri and died in his bed.

General John McNeil managed to keep his head on his shoulders the rest of the war and for many years enjoyed a sinecure as postmaster of St. Louis.

I got off the Empress at Cairo and until I met Dr. Davidson last August (1912), I had never laid eyes on a fellow passenger of that boat. A brief comparison of war service soon developed the fact that we had passed through the "fiery furnace" together, and it ended by my agreeing to put the story on paper.

The Vanishing "Vet"

The Civil War Veteran is in a class by himself; there were none quite like him before that war, and none just like him since.

At the call of war he dropped everything he was doing and hurried to the camp; he did not know where he was going, nor what he was to do, he only knew there was a fire somewhere and he was going into the bucket line and help to put it out.

He did not know whether any one was going to pay him or not, neither did he care; the whole "bloomin'" thing was a lottery to him, not knowing whether he was going to draw a blank or a prize, and whether he was to command or be commanded, gave him no concern; his single ambition being to do his level best in whatever position he was placed.

There were of him a total of 2,778,309. "It is hard to conceive, but it is virtually true, that the war of the rebellion was actually fought by boys. Of the above total more than 2,000,000 at the time of their enlistment were under 21 years of age.

25 boys were only ten years of age.

225 were twelve years of age.

1,523 were fourteen years of age.

844,891 were sixteen years of age.

1,151,848 were eighteen years of age.

2,150,708 is the exact number under twenty-one at enlistment.

Only 618,511 were over twenty-one when they took up arms."

There is no other such record in the world and that is what they did.

One day at Gettysburg 30,000 of them held their line in an open field all day long, and when the sun went down 10,000 dead and wounded lay behind the lines, while their victorious comrades camped on the field of battle, and the story of Gettysburg is the story of the war.

Recently it has been a common thing to hear that the Civil War was a small affair as compared with later wars, but the truth is coming out.

"During the World War the United States put under arms about 4,000,000 men, one-half of whom served abroad, and up to date (January 21, 1919) the dead, killed in action, died of wounds and disease totals 63,796."

Against this stands the death roll of the Union Army alone, 359,528, not including the number discharged for wounds or disease who died at home. The historians of the Civil War estimate the death roll of the north to be 500,000.

In the north 45 per cent of the military population were in the army, and from the standpoint of manpower alone the military effort of the nation in the Civil War was, in proportion to population, more than four times as great as it has been in the World War. The Civil War still remains the great military effort of the United States.

The boy of "61" was a very different individual when he turned his face homeward at the close of the war in "65."

The hardships and discipline of war had sobered and steadied him; the constant presence of danger had made him a thoughtful, courageous, self-reliant man.

He was fully aware and justly proud of the sacrifices he had made for the country, but he never sought to commercialize them. All he asked was a man's chance in a peaceful country, so to make sure of it and to "cinch" the victory he had won he organized the Grand Army of the Republic, which is thus described by a recent writer:

"Unique, distinct, exclusive, cloaked in its own individuality, recognized leader of the most practical object lesson in patriotic consecration, giant among other organizations in swaying the minds of legislators, it became in its first quarter of a century the impelling force in our country's onward march to the highest goal of material national achievement and is still, in its fifty-sixth year, a forceful factor in American civics."

Of this great organization only the "rear guard" is left, but it is falling back slowly, with arms in its hands, vigilantly watching every point of attack, and firing at every hostile head.

The Civil War Soldier is vanishing like a dream, but in the minds of men his outstanding figure will ever remain that of the greatest "volunteer" soldier in the world.

